freedom and peace and will not break its pledge by going to the front." My office made copies of *Pravda*'s communication and sent these to the front regiments that expected to be transferred to Finland. In a covering note, I explained to the men that their transfer to the rear would have to be delayed.

Three days later my office was flooded with resolutions from the front demanding that the Finnish division be sent forward at once. Some regiments declared themselves ready to proceed to Finland to smoke out the traitors who had dug in there. Then I sent these resolutions to the Finnish division with a stern confirmation of the marching orders. The Bolsheviks were reluctant to stir up a quarrel between the rear garrisons and front regiments. The division boarded the train on schedule. True, the soldiers decorated the train with Communist banners, and the division proved to be so demoralized it could not be used for any service. But at least Finland was relieved of riotous gangs and the officers held as hostages by the men were freed. More important from the political point of view, the operation proved it was still possible to fight Communists in the rear garrisons with the aid of the front troops.

Elated by this success, the War Ministry asked Cheremissov to transfer some regiments of the Petrograd garrison to the front and replace them with units from front positions. The general again threw the operation into my lap. I prepared for his signature an order to the Commander of the Petrograd Military District, who was his subordinate in strategic matters, instructing him to designate four infantry regiments to exchange places with four regiments at the front. The Petrograd Soviet decided to send a delegation to discuss the matter with the soldiers in the trenches and offer them a substitute plan: To quit the front at once, without waiting for replacements. I immediately wired the Petrograd Soviet inviting its delegation to come to my office in Pskov to meet the representatives of the army. Cheremissov was reluctant to take part in this conference, but I told him that his absence would be interpreted as a snub to the Petrograd Soviet.

The delegation arrived in Pskov—some fifty soldiers from different outfits. Some of them knew me from my work in the Tauride Palace and some others had met me in their barracks. To my surprise, they greeted me as an old comrade. Opening the conference, I asked Cheremissov to brief our guests on the situation at the front. He spoke in a bored manner, showing that he was not interested in troop rotation. Then I began to cross-examine him. "Do you believe that the Northern Front may be attacked by the Germans in the near future?"